

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A voice messaging system, comprising:
an analog telephone line interface;
a voice recorder/playback module;
a controller adapted to control functions of said voice messaging system; and

a ring signal bypass module adapted to detect a presence of an analog non-ring signal initiated by a caller without prompt ~~from said voice messaging system~~ utilizing said analog telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call, and to cause said voice messaging system to direct said incoming call to said voice recorder/playback module without an audible ring signal to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

2. (previously presented) The voice messaging system according to claim 1, wherein:

said analog telephone line interface is adapted to detect a line reversal on said telephone line.

3. (original) The voice messaging system according to claim 1, wherein:

said voice messaging system is a telephone answering device.

4. (currently amended) A method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

receiving an analog non-ring signal initiated by a caller without prompt from ~~said voice messaging system~~ at an analog telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

5. (previously presented) The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

allowing said caller to record a voice message.

6. (previously presented) The method of allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 4, wherein said answering comprises:

allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

7. (canceled)

8. (currently amended) Apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system, comprising:

means for receiving an analog non-ring signal initiated by a caller ~~without prompt from said voice messaging system~~ at an analog telephone line interface indicating a presence of an incoming call to said voice messaging system; and

means for answering said incoming call by said voice messaging system without an audible ring signal to announce said incoming call by said voice messaging system.

9. (previously presented) The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for playing an outgoing greeting message to a caller associated with said incoming call without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call; and

means for allowing said caller to record a voice message.

10. (previously presented) The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, wherein said means for answering comprises:

means for allowing a caller associated with said incoming call to record a voice message without requiring reception of any ring signal relating to said incoming call.

11. (previously presented) The apparatus for allowing bypass of a ring signal in a voice messaging system according to claim 8, further comprising:

means for inputting a request for a transmission of said analog non-ring signal from a calling party's telephone.

12. (currently amended) A method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party, said voice messaging system including voice message memory for recording a voice message, the method comprising:

providing an analog ring signal bypass module in said voice messaging system;

activating said analog ring signal bypass module based on a request from said calling party without prompt from said voice messaging system; and

bypassing an audible ring signal by said voice messaging system announcing an incoming call from said calling party to said voice messaging system.

13. (previously presented) The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, further comprising:

allowing said calling party to record a voice message in said voice message memory before reception of any analog ring signal.

14. (previously presented) The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, further comprising:

entering a request for performance of said step of bypassing all analog ring signals by said calling party.

15. (original) The method of allowing a calling party to bypass a ring signal in a voice messaging system of a called party according to claim 12, wherein:

said request is entered by said calling party before a telephone number of said called party is dialed by said calling party.

16. (canceled)

17. (canceled)

18. (canceled)

19. (canceled)

20. (canceled)

21. (canceled)